



Following Napoleon III's surrender (above), Georges Clemenceau (above right) rallied the people of Paris to defend their city.

**WITNESS HISTORY** AUDIO

**Vive la France!**

The news sent shock waves through Paris. Napoleon III had surrendered to the Prussians and Prussian forces were now about to advance on Paris. Could the city survive? Georges Clemenceau (kleh mahn soh), a young French politician, rallied the people of Paris to defend their homeland:

“Citizens, must France destroy herself and disappear, or shall she resume her old place in the vanguard of nations? . . . Each of us knows his duty. We are children of the Revolution. Let us seek inspiration in the example of our forefathers in 1792, and like them we shall conquer. *Vive la France!* (Long Live France!)”

**Focus Question** What democratic reforms were made in France during the Third Republic?



## Division and Democracy in France

**Objectives**

- List the domestic and foreign policies of Napoleon III.
- Analyze the impact of the Dreyfus affair and other challenges of the Third Republic.
- Describe the French government's steps toward reform in the early 1900s.



For four months, Paris resisted the German onslaught. But finally, in January 1871, the French government at Versailles was forced to accept Prussian surrender terms.

The Franco-Prussian War ended a long period of French domination of Europe that had begun under Louis XIV. Yet a Third Republic rose from the ashes of the Second Empire of Napoleon III. Economic growth, democratic reforms, and the fierce nationalism expressed by Clemenceau all played a part in shaping modern France.

**Terms, People, and Places**

Napoleon III	coalition
Suez Canal	Dreyfus affair
provisional premier	libel
	Zionism

**Note Taking**

**Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence** Draw a timeline and label the main events described in this section.



### France Under Napoleon III

After the revolution of 1848, **Napoleon III**, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, rose to power and set up the Second Empire. His appeal cut across lines of class and ideology. The bourgeoisie saw him as a strong leader who would restore order. His promise to end poverty gave hope to the lower classes. People of all classes were attracted by his name, a reminder of the days when France had towered over Europe. Unlike his famous uncle, however, Napoleon III would bring France neither glory nor an empire.

**Limits on Liberty** On the surface, the Second Empire looked like a constitutional monarchy. In fact, Napoleon III ruled almost as a dictator, with the power to appoint his cabinet, the upper house of the legislature, and many officials. Although the assembly was elected by universal male suffrage, appointed officials “managed” elections so that supporters of the emperor would win. Debate was limited, and newspapers faced strict censorship.



In the 1860s, the emperor began to ease controls. He lifted some censorship and gave the legislature more power. On the eve of his disastrous war with Prussia, Napoleon III even issued a new constitution that extended democratic rights.

**Promoting Economic Growth** Like much of Europe, France prospered at mid-century. Napoleon III promoted investment in industry and large-scale ventures such as railroad building and the urban renewal of Paris. During this period, a French entrepreneur, Ferdinand de Lesseps (LAY seps), organized the building of the **Suez Canal** in Egypt to link the Mediterranean with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Workers enjoyed some benefits of economic growth. Napoleon legalized labor unions, extended public education to girls, and created a small public health program. Still, in France, as in other industrial nations, many people lived in great poverty.

**Foreign Adventures** Napoleon's worst failures were in foreign affairs. In the 1860s, he tried to place Maximilian, an Austrian Hapsburg prince, on the throne of Mexico. Through Maximilian, Napoleon hoped to turn Mexico into a French satellite. But after a large commitment of troops and money, the adventure failed. Mexican patriots resisted fiercely, and the United States protested. After four years, France withdrew its troops. Maximilian was overthrown and shot by Mexican patriots.

Napoleon's successes were almost as costly as his failures. He helped Italian nationalists defeat Austria, and in return, the regions of Nice (nees) and Savoy were ceded to France. But this victory soon backfired when a united Italy emerged as a rival on France's border. And, though

## INFOGRAPHIC

### The Siege of Paris

For over four months beginning in September 1870, Prussian troops surrounded Paris. The city was almost completely cut off from the rest of the country except for messages that could be carried out on perilous balloon flights (far right top), by carrier pigeon, or by small capsules floated down the Seine River (far right bottom). Despite the large amounts of food that had been amassed prior to the siege, food was in short supply. Parisians searched for horses, rats (right), and even zoo and circus animals were consumed in the face of hunger. In the end, the French surrendered and agreed to disband their army and pay a war indemnity. Nearly 2,000 French troops were killed and thousands of Parisians died of diseases worsened by malnutrition and the cold weather.

Victorious Prussian troops pose in front of the ruins of the French Fort Issy near Paris.





France and Britain won the Crimean War, France had little to show for its terrible losses except a small foothold in the Middle East.

**A Disastrous War With Prussia** At this same time, France was growing increasingly concerned about the rise of a great rival, Prussia. The Prussian leader Otto von Bismarck shrewdly manipulated the French and lured Napoleon into war in 1870.

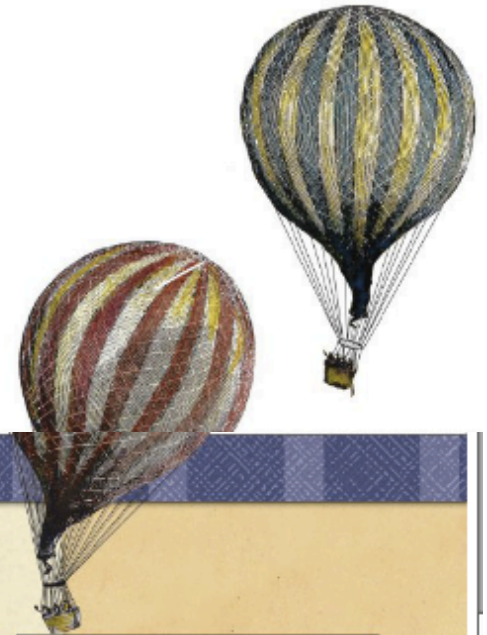
As you have read, the Franco-Prussian War was a disaster for France. Following the capture of Napoleon III, German forces advanced toward Paris and encircled the city. After four months of siege by Prussian troops, starving Parisians were reduced to catching rats and killing circus animals for food.

**Checkpoint** What were some of the successes and failures of Napoleon III's Second Empire?

## Challenges of the Third Republic

At the news of Napoleon's capture, republicans in Paris declared an end to the Second Empire. They set up a **provisional**, or temporary, government that shortly evolved into France's Third Republic. In 1871, the newly elected National Assembly accepted a harsh peace with Germany. France had to surrender the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine and pay a huge sum to Germany. The French were eager to avenge their loss.

**The Paris Commune** In 1871, an uprising broke out in Paris. Rebels set up the Paris Commune. Like the radical government during the French Revolution, its goal was to save the Republic from royalists. Communards,



**Paris Under Siege**

- Prussian siege line
- Prussian batteries
- Prussian attacks
- French defensive line
- French forts
- French attacks
- City walls

Scale in Miles: 0 1 2 3 4  
Scale in Kilometers: 0 1 2 3 4

VERSAILLES PARIS SEINE MARNE RIVER

**Thinking Critically**

- Map Skills** From which directions did the Prussians launch their major attacks?
- Determine Relevance** Why is the state of a city's food supply so important during a military siege?





as the rebels were called, included workers and socialists as well as bourgeois republicans. As patriots, they rejected the harsh peace that the National Assembly had signed with Germany. Radicals dreamed of creating a new socialist order.

The National Assembly ordered the Paris Commune to disband. When the Communards refused, the government sent troops to retake Paris. For weeks, civil war raged. As government troops advanced, the rebels set fire to several government buildings, toppled a monument commemorating Napoleon I, and slaughtered a number of hostages. Finally, government forces butchered some 20,000 Communards. The suppression of the Paris Commune left bitter memories that deepened social divisions within France.



#### The French Tricolor

The Third Republic eventually adopted the tricolor, a symbol of the French Revolution, as the official flag of France.


**Government Structure** Despite its shaky beginnings, the Third Republic remained in place for 70 years. The new republic had a two-house legislature. The powerful lower house, or Chamber of Deputies, was elected by universal male suffrage. Together with the Senate, it elected the president of the republic. However, he had little power and served mostly as a figurehead. Real power was in the hands of the **premier** (pronounced *pre-myer*), or prime minister.

Unlike Britain, with its two-party system, France had many parties, reflecting the wide splits within the country. Among them were royalists, constitutional monarchists, moderate republicans, and radicals. With so many parties, no single party could win a majority in the legislature. In order to govern, politicians had to form **coalitions**, or alliances of various parties. Once a coalition controlled enough votes, it could then name a premier and form a cabinet.

Multiparty systems and coalition governments are common in Europe. Such alliances allow citizens to vote for a party that most nearly matches their own beliefs. Coalition governments, however, are often unstable. If one party deserts a coalition, the government might lose its majority in the legislature. The government then falls, and new elections must be held. In the first 10 years of the Third Republic, 50 different coalition governments were formed and fell.

**Political Scandals** Despite frequent changes of governments, France made economic progress. It paid Germany the huge sum required by the peace treaty and expanded its overseas empire. But in the 1880s and 1890s, a series of political scandals shook public trust in the government.

One crisis erupted when a popular minister of war, General Georges Boulanger (pronounced *boo lah-n zhay*), rallied royalists and ultranationalists eager for revenge on Germany. Accused of plotting to overthrow the republic, Boulanger fled to Belgium. In another scandal, a nephew of the president was caught selling nominations for the Legion of Honor, France's highest award. The president was forced to resign.

 **Checkpoint** What challenges did the Third Republic face during its 70 years in power?

## Anti-Semitism and the Dreyfus Affair

The most serious and divisive scandal began in 1894. A high-ranking army officer, Alfred Dreyfus, was accused of spying for Germany. However, at his military trial, neither Dreyfus nor his lawyer was allowed to



see the evidence against him. The injustice was rooted in anti-Semitism. The military elite detested Dreyfus, the first Jewish person to reach such a high position in the army. Although Dreyfus proclaimed his innocence, he was convicted and condemned to life imprisonment on Devil's Island, a desolate penal colony off the coast of South America. By 1896, new evidence pointed to another officer, Ferdinand Esterhazy, as the spy. Still, the army refused to grant Dreyfus a new trial.


**Deep Divisions** The **Dreyfus affair**, as it was called, scarred French politics and society for decades. Royalists, ultranationalists, and Church officials charged Dreyfus supporters, or “Dreyfusards,” with undermining France. Paris echoed with cries of “Long live the army!” and “Death to traitors!” Dreyfusards, mostly liberals and republicans, upheld ideals of justice and equality in the face of massive public anger. In 1898, French novelist Émile Zola joined the battle. In an article headlined *J'Accuse!* (I Accuse!), he charged the army and government with suppressing the truth. As a result, Zola was convicted of **libel**, or the knowing publication of false and damaging statements. He fled into exile.

Slowly, though, the Dreyfusards made progress and eventually the evidence against Dreyfus was shown to be forged. In 1906, a French court finally cleared Dreyfus of all charges and restored his honors. That was a victory for justice, but the political scars of the Dreyfus affair took longer to heal.

**Calls for a Jewish State** The Dreyfus case reflected the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe. The Enlightenment and the French Revolution had spread ideas about religious toleration. In Western Europe, some Jews had gained jobs in government, universities, and other areas of life. Others had achieved success in banking and business, but most struggled to survive in the ghettos of Eastern Europe or the slums of Western Europe.

By the late 1800s, however, anti-Semitism was again on the rise. Anti-Semites were often members of the lower middle class who felt insecure in their social and economic position. Steeped in the new nationalist fervor, they adopted an aggressive intolerance for outsiders and a violent hatred of Jews.

The Dreyfus case and the pogroms in Russia stirred Theodor Herzl (HURT sul), a Hungarian Jewish journalist living in France. He called for Jews to form their own separate state, where they would have rights that were otherwise denied to them in European countries. Herzl helped launch **Zionism**, a movement devoted to rebuilding a Jewish state in the ancient homeland. Many Jews had kept this dream alive since the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Romans. In 1897, Herzl organized the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.

 **Checkpoint** In what ways was the Zionist movement a reaction to the Dreyfus case?

## Reforms in France

Although shaken by the Dreyfus affair, France achieved serious reforms in the early 1900s. Like Britain, France passed laws regulating wages, hours, and safety conditions for workers. It set up a system of free public elementary schools. Creating public

### Dreyfus Affair Caricature

This 1899 caricature, *The Traitor*, portrays Alfred Dreyfus as a lindworm, a mythical dragon with no wings in many German legends. In protest of Dreyfus's conviction, French novelist Émile Zola published a letter in 1898 in which he accused the army and government of suppressing the truth in the Dreyfus trial. “The truth is on the march, and nothing shall stop it,” Zola wrote.





#### Penmanship Lesson

One of the many reforms of the early 1900s in France was the establishment of free public elementary schools.

#### Vocabulary Builder


**repress**—(see PRES) *vt.* to put down, subdue

schools was also part of a campaign to reduce the power of the Roman Catholic Church, which controlled education.

**Separating Church and State** Like Germany, France tried to **repress** Church involvement in government. Republicans viewed the Church as a conservative force that opposed progressive policies. In the Dreyfus affair, it had backed the army and ultranationalists.

The government closed Church schools, along with many convents and monasteries. In 1905, it passed a law to separate church and state and stopped paying the salaries of the clergy. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews were all to enjoy freedom of worship, but none would have any special treatment from the government.

**Women's Rights** Under the Napoleonic Code, French women had few rights. By the 1890s, a growing women's rights movement sought legal reforms. It made some gains, such as an 1896 law giving married women the right to their own earnings. In 1909, Jeanne-Elizabeth Schmahl founded the French Union for Women's Suffrage. Rejecting the radical tactics used in Britain, Schmahl favored legal protests. Yet even liberal men were reluctant to grant women suffrage. They feared that women would vote for Church and conservative causes. In the end, French women did not win the vote until after World War II.

 **Checkpoint** Describe two social reforms during the late 1800s and early 1900s in France.

## Looking Ahead

By 1914, France was the largest democratic country in Europe, with a constitution that protected basic rights. France's economy was generally prosperous, and its overseas empire was second only to that of Britain.

Yet the outlook was not all smooth. Coalition governments rose and fell at the slightest pressure. To the east loomed the industrial might of Germany. Many French citizens were itching for a chance to avenge the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and liberate the "lost provinces" of Alsace and Lorraine. That chance came in 1914, when all of Europe exploded into World War I.

## SECTION 3 Assessment

### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-2334

#### Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

#### Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence**  
Use your completed timeline to answer the Focus Question: What democratic reforms were made in France during the Third Republic?

#### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Summarize** Describe the government of France during the Second Empire.
4. **Draw Inferences** How did the Paris Commune and the Dreyfus affair heighten divisions in France?
5. **Summarize** Describe two reforms enacted in France in the early 1900s.
6. **Express Problems Clearly** (a) What solution did Zionists propose for the problem of widespread anti-Semitism? (b) Why do you think they felt it was the best solution?

#### Writing About History

**Quick Write: Write a Conclusion** Do additional research to learn more about Ferdinand de Lesseps, the Frenchman who orchestrated the construction of the Suez Canal. Write a one-paragraph conclusion that could be used at the end of a biographical essay on de Lesseps.